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OBITUARIES

A James Angleton, Ex-Chief Of Counterintelligence, Dies

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James J. Angleton, 69, a retired head of counterintelligence at the CIA, where he gained a reputation as a brilliant, tireless, single-minded, and, even by agency standards, mysterious guardian of the nation's secrets, died of cancer yesterday at Sibley Memorial Hospital.

Mr. Angleton joined the CIA shortly after it was formed in 1947 and he helped organize its clandestine side—the part that spies as distinct from the part that gathers intelligence from published sources or by other overt means. In 1954, he was named head of counterintelligence—the part that protects the organization and all its works from hostile services. He held that job until early 1975, when he was forced to resign.

In the course of his career, Mr. Angleton became one of the most celebrated intelligence officers of his time. Stooped, lean, professorial and chain-smoking, he wrote poetry and grew orchids for relaxation. And though his detractors were numerous, no one denied that the accomplishments of this secretive man were extraordinary.

In the end, however, there were those who, despite his achievements, appeared to believe that he was becoming something of a liability to the agency to which he was so clearly devoted. Intelligence work is secret and so are attempts to find out about it. It was Mr. Angleton's task to expose what is in a certain sense unknowable. If he uncovered many enemy spies—and he did that—he could never be certain that another had not escaped him. His efforts to pierce this enigma eventually caused such disruption in the CIA that he fell from grace.

Mr. Angleton began to make his reputation while he was still an Army major serving in Italy in World War II with the Office of

Strategic Services, the predecessor of the CIA. He was credited with helping establish what came to be the CIA's "special relationship" with Israel's secret service, the Mossad, that resulted in the United States' obtaining vast quantities of data on Soviet military hardware and on conditions in the Soviet Union.

He was credited by some with helping expose Kim Philby, the former high official of Britain's MI6 (Secret Service) who fled to Moscow in 1963. Philby spied for the Soviet Union for 30 years and he was a colleague of Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess, the famous Soviet spies who fled the West in the early 1950s.

Mr. Angleton helped develop the trail that led to Rudolf Abel, the KGB colonel who was a major Soviet spy in the United States in the 1950s. Abel was traded in 1961 for Francis Gary Powers, the American U2 pilot who had been shot down while flying a spy plane mission over the Soviet Union in May 1960.

And he helped uncover Soviet spies who had penetrated intelligence or security agencies in France and West Germany.

Perhaps his best-known feat was obtaining a copy of Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's secret speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956. In that speech, Khrushchev denounced the late dictator Josef Stalin. Almost a decade earlier, Mr. Angleton obtained correspondence between Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito and Stalin that foreshadowed Yugoslavia's defection from Moscow in 1948, the first historic rift in the communist world.

Tom Braden, a journalist and former senior CIA official, wrote in 1974 that the CIA is the only major intelligence service in the world that has never employed a "mole," as deep-penetration agents were dubbed by John Le Carre. High officials in the intelligence community

believe this is still true. This is a measure of what Mr. Angleton accomplished.

But some thought the price was too high. As Mr. Angleton cast a wider and wider net of suspicion, brilliant careers in the CIA itself were blighted, according to former high officials.

A famous incident involved Anatoli Golitsin, a Soviet defector who in 1962 told Mr. Angleton that a Soviet "mole" had infiltrated the CIA and that a "false" defector would soon arrive to discredit what Golitsin had said. A year later, Yuri Nosenko defected from the Soviets and told the CIA that Golitsin could not be trusted. Mr. Angleton chose to believe Golitsin and so he kept Nosenko in jail for three years while he frantically and fruitlessly searched for the "mole." Nosenko's release finally was ordered by CIA director Richard Helms.

Mr. Angleton's critics cited this incident as an example of what they believed to be counterproductive in his work. There even were stories that the counterintelligence chief had been investigated as a possible "mole" himself.

The criticism came to a head after William E. Colby, another career officer of achievement, became director of central intelligence in 1973. In his memoirs, "Honorable Men," Colby wrote that after he took office he "looked in vain for some tangible results in the counterintelligence field, and found little or none. I did not suspect Angleton and his staff of engaging in improper activities. I just could not figure out what they were all doing."

So Colby offered Mr. Angleton a new job writing a manual on counterintelligence work. Mr. Angleton refused and his resignation followed.

James Jesus Angleton was born in Boise, Idaho. His father, James Hugh Angleton, had chased Pancho Villa into Mexico with Gen. John J. (Black Jack) Pershing, and while in Mexico, he had married a 17-year-old woman. The Angleton family traveled to Europe in the 1920s, where the elder Angleton became head of National Cash Register's operations on that continent.

James Angleton was educated in England. He then entered Yale University where he became a scholar of Italian literature, specializing in Dante, and gained a great reputa-

tion as a poet. He also was a fan of horse-racing, a competent poker player and an omnivorous reader.

He and his roommate, the poet Reed Whittemore, founded the poetry quarterly "Furioso" while still undergraduates. In addition to their own work, the magazine published poems by such figures as Ezra Pound, e.e. cummings, Archibald MacLeish and William Carlos Williams. After Yale, Mr. Angleton went to Harvard University, where he studied law and business. In 1943, he went into the Army for World War II service.

In his service in Italy, his intelligence skills and distinctive airs made an impression. Gen. William (Wild Bill) Donovan, the head of the OSS, called him the OSS's "most professional counterintelligence officer." Others told of coming upon Mr. Angleton late at night reading and writing poetry.

After the war, Mr. Angleton stayed in the Army, attaining the rank of major. He helped the Italian Christian Democratic Party of Alcide de Gasperi turn back the communists at the polls in 1948 in what became known as "the miracle of '48." It was during this period that he made contacts with the Israelis that later became a special intelligence relationship. He then joined the CIA.

Mr. Angleton, who lived in Arlington, is survived by his wife, Cicely d'Autremont Angleton; three children, James Charles Angleton of Los Angeles, Guru Sangat Kaur of Great Falls, Va., and Lucy d'Autremont Angleton of Albuquerque; one brother, Hugh Angleton of Boise, Idaho; two sisters, Carmen Angleton of Rome, and Delores Guarnieri of Florence, and two grandchildren.